Interview with Robert Lochner

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ROBERT LOCHNER

Interviewed by: G. Lewis Schmidt

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Q: This is Lew Schmidt interviewing Bob Lochner at DACOR House on October 17, 1991. Bob you have had a very interesting lifetime and a rather unusual background so I wish you would just start by giving us some background as to where you were born, what your education was, how you got to Germany in the first place, and then you just take it from there. When I have questions, I will stop you.

Biosketch

LOCHNER: I was born in 1918 in New York and went to Germany at the age of five because my dad became chief of the AP office in Berlin. He wisely sent me to a German school. There was an American school in Berlin at the time and most of the children of the then small colony in the twenties of diplomats, businessmen, educators went to this American school. I knew most of them and none of them ever really learned decent German.

So I grew up bilingually and stayed in Berlin through the Abitur, which is a little more than the end of high school. Then I went back to the University of Chicago where I got my B.A. and MA. In 1941 I started at NBC short-wave where I worked through the war.

I returned to Germany a week after the ending of the war with an ad hoc organization of the War Department called the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey. That took about six months and from the fall of '45 on I was doing USIA work. That is I became head of the newly created news service for all US zone stations. Then control officer for a year in Frankfurt until Radio Frankfurt was turned over as the first German station by General Clay to German management in 1949. Next I was chief editor of the new Frankfurt edition of the Neue Zeitung, a German-language newspaper put out by the U.S. military government. When the two issues from Munich and Frankfurt merged, I became head of the press section of the U.S. High Commission in Germany from '52-'55. From 1955-57, I was first Deputy PAO and then PAO in Saigon, Vietnam. The next three years I was briefly head of the German Service and the West European Division, but most of the time head of the European Division of the Voice in Washington. In 1961-68 I was director of RIAS in Berlin and my final post was as Press and Cultural Attach# at the American Embassy in Bern. Then I retired from the Agency and for the last 20 years I have been director of an institute training third world journalists in Berlin where I still live at this time.

During Most Of War, Lochner Broadcasts For NBC; Anecdotes Of Experience With VOA, Which Began Operation After NBC and CBS Did

Q:Well, let's go back now to the beginning of your radio career. Were you with the OWI during the war period when you were still in the United States?

LOCHNER: We preceded government broadcasting because few people remember that during World War II there was not one voice of America there were three voices of America. NBC and CBS had their own independent short-wave services. I became head of the German service at NBC and when we got into the war and the Office of War Information was created and the Voice was set up there was an effort to coordinate the three services by means of what really amounted to a kind of censor who was called the coordinator.

The first three OWI coordinators at NBC short-wave didn't last very long. They took their job very seriously and started blue-penciling our manuscripts and I personally was involved in the removal of the third one. He had, I thought, rather arbitrarily changed a script of mine. I went to the head of the short-wave division who took me up to the powerful Vice President of NBC, John Royal, who in my presence called Elmer Davis, the Director of the Office of War Information. I will never forget the brief conversation. “Elmer this is John. Elmer I don't like your third man either. Pull him out.” That was the strange power relationship at that time.

So the fourth one, Charlie Levy was his name, apparently got different instructions and he would come to me or one of the other language services and say: “Bob, your commentary here is, of course, in some ways the exact opposite of the guidance. Couldn't you change that a little bit?” Well, you could do business with a man like that and he stayed throughout the war.The two private short-wave services, of course, had greater leeway than the Voice and I will give you a specific example. It so happened that before I went on the air in my afternoon broadcast we always checked with the AP ticker for any late bulletin. Five minutes before air time a bulletin came that there had been the first US air attack on Tokyo. So without even reflecting it I put it at the head of my news show. People at VOA monitored us and there was a complaint that I should have waited for an official announcement by the White House. There was a kind of a hearing and my defense was after all that censorship is supposed to keep the enemy in the dark and with juvenile heavy humor I said, “I assume that the Japanese were aware of the fact that bombs were falling on their heads or do you, the VOA representatives, mean to imply that I shouldn't have used it because a reputable news agency like AP might invent the story?” Of course they didn't think so, so I was exonerated. But no VOA language service could have gone on the air immediately just on the strength of an AP bulletin. This is an illustration of how we had greater leeway.

I will give you an example in the opposite direction. When the assassination attempt on Hitler happened, we had a BBC liaison man in our office. He came to us and said: “I suggest you do as the BBC is doing on this day. We dropped all other news in the German service because the Germans on a day like that are not interested say in battles in the Pacific.” We thought that had great merit and wanted to do that. But the orders came down from VOA that all short-wave services were to treat this assassination attempt as just an effort by some German generals who saw that the war was lost and wanted to quit in time to prepare for the next war—I remember pretty distinctly that was the way they phrased it. So there was a case on a really big policy issues where, naturally, we had to conform to the line the U.S. government was taking.

Q: Were there any other interesting situations of that nature during the period before the war actually ended?

LOCHNER: I can recall only one instance where there was a bit of irritation between us and the German service at VOA. They wanted us to use—at that time there was no tape and we had to use these big shellac records which of course you couldn't correct. They had recorded a half hour show in a German POW camp and wanted us to use it too. As we listened to it, and of course I didn't rely only on my own ears, my colleagues were present too—we were a four man section at NBC—distinctly heard several times that prisoners were shouting “Heil Hitler.” So we refused to use it. The VOA were very angry, hurt as they were very proud of this show. But there again the power relationship was such that I had, as head of the German service, the autonomy to say: “No thank you we don't want to use that.”

Other than that we were left completely on our own and there was no further coordination that I can think of. As I said there was always this liaison man and we got along very nicely. Since he was so nice, if he would plead with us to make a certain change which didn't amount to terribly much we would.

I am assuming that it worked the same way at CBS. I never had any contact with them. I had no time. We were only a two-man section when we got into the war and for four months I didn't have a single day off because when we got into the war they added to our afternoon half hour broadcast another half hour twelve hours apart, in the middle of the night. So the two of us would go one two weeks straight day and the other night shift and then the day guy would stay on for the night shift so for four months I didn't have a day off. So that was how meager the resources were.

Then they increased it and by war's end it was a four-man section.

Q: Since I wasn't involved in radio during the war, I was in the military, I have never been quite clear as to what all these divisions were. I gather from what you say that NBC and CBS were broadcasting along with OWI all through the war?

LOCHNER: Not along with OWI. They had their own transmitters. Those two commercial networks had gone into short-wave broadcasting long before the OWI was created. They hoped after the war they would go commercial. At NBC we had six language services. Two of them, Portuguese and Spanish to South America already had commercials. The other languages were English, German, Italian, and French. The thought was that after the war those would also go commercial because after all a commercial outfit like that didn't do this out of the goodness of their heart. Actually and here I am not exact on the details, I think about a year after the end of the war they, NBC and CBS, gave up. They maintained these independent services throughout the war in the hope of continuing and then they gave up. That left WRUL, a religious station, broadcasting short-wave, but I am not really counting such religious stations as they weren't in the same league.

Q: OWI, itself, went out of business at some point but I don't remember exactly when that date was. Do you know?

In Late 1945, Lochner Goes To Work For U.S. Army Information Services, But Is Later Transferred To Department of State Jurisdiction Under HICOG

LOCHNER: No, by that time I was in the Occupation Forces in Germany. Relevant for us was only the fact that VOA went on. We really, in the early occupation period, were the predecessors of USIA. We did the transfer of the German radio stations from American control to German control. The Information Control Division contained a lot of people who later transferred to USIA. First we were technically War Department. When the change over of military government to High Commissioner took place we all automatically became State Department—no exams, no nothing. Then in 1953 when USIA was created, we all became USIA people. So all of these people like myself were engaged in radio work, in publishing a newspaper—all the kind of work that the USIS people did later on when USIA was created.

Q: At that time, before OMGUS stopped and the High Commissioner started, you were directly under the control of the military weren't you?

LOCHNER: Yes. The first four years we were outright military government. The hierarchy was under General Clay who ran Germany in effect. There were various divisions and one was called the Information Control Division. It had various subsections. For instance, Colonel Textor was the head of the division and under him was a civilian, Charlie Lewis, who was the head of the radio section. Under him came the various control officers for US controlled stations in Bremen, Frankfurt, Munich and Stuttgart, plus, of course, RIAS. RIAS history is very interesting. Few people remember that all through the Fall of 1945 we, the three Western allies, were on the mat, so to speak, with the Russians to come to a working arrangement for the joint use of the only existing radio station in Berlin at the time, which, although the studios were in the British sector, the Russians controlled completely because they had occupied Berlin first and did not allow any Western power to share this.

Russian Intransigence Forces Creation of RIAS (Office of Military Government, U.S.)

I remember distinctly that we were kept informed, we at Radio Frankfurt, Radio Munich, etc., and Charlie Lewis told us that the last offer from the Russians was one hour a day for the three Western allies on this existing radio station, the rest of the time for themselves.

RIAS Initially Broadcasts Via A Unique System

This obviously was unacceptable, so in February 1946 we started up with RIAS, which was then called DIAS (that stands for Drahtfunk im amerikanischer sektor). Drahtfunk was a kind of wired radio which the Nazis had developed. Simple sets which you attached to the telephone which meant they did not have to go off the air when enemy planes were approaching. This was exceedingly important for the population of big cities. Of course the Nazis learned quickly that the normal medium wave transmitters were ideal beacons for the American and British planes, so as these approached they had to go off the air. That is why they developed this wire radio which permitted them to continue broadcasting—American planes 10 minutes from n; five minutes from Berlin—and people learned then quietly to go down to the air raid shelter. Of these wired radio sets, about 30,000 were still in working condition in Berlin after the war so we started out with that.

Q: Now in order to operate on that basis, you had to wire each one of those separate radios in different houses or different establishments into the system which was a central station.

LOCHNER: No, because the broadcast went through the telephone line.

Q: I see. The originating station went through the telephone lines, but from where did they broadcast? Didn't they have studios that broadcast the program that went through the telephone lines?

LOCHNER: Right. And of course we requisitioned a building —the same one RIAS is still in today—and for only a few months broadcast on this tentative basis to a very small audience. Then we brought up a captured 10 KW Wehrmacht transmitter from West

Germany (it is still in the museum at RIAS) which permitted medium wave broadcasting on a 10 KW station. At that moment, the name was changed from DIAS to RIAS, which both in English and in German works out to Radio in the American Sector. Then, of course, over the years it was greatly expanded until it wound up with two powerful medium wave transmitters, two FM transmitters, a short wave transmitter, etc. Those were the beginnings. All these five radio operations, the four stations in West Germany and RIAS, came under the Information Control Division of the military government.

End Of OMGUS (Military) And Operation Under High Commission Of Germany (HICOG) As State Department Entity

When we changed from military government to High Commission, it was just a change in titles. The top man became PAO before USIA was ever created. McCloy had as his equivalent of the colonel who had been director of ICD—he had a public affairs officer under whom all operations like radio, newspapers, etc. were gathered together.

Q: Who was that individual?

LOCHNER: That for a brief time only was a very distinguished elderly publisher from Louisiana, Ralph Nicholson who unfortunately spoke no word of German. After General Clay had had such a magnificent relationship with the press, both foreign and German, Mr. McCloy had a very poor start with the press because this man Nicholson was not qualified to advise him. So some kind of cry for help went out and within six weeks, Shepard Stone, up until then Deputy Editor of the Sunday Edition of the New York Times, a real top pro who spoke fluent German, because he had taken his Ph.D. in Germany, was sent as Deputy PAO. Within another six weeks, Nicholson went home and Shep Stone became the PAO.

Because as a side line I first had been General Clay's interpreter and then Mr. McCloy's interpreter, I observed from close up that Shep Stone was really the most powerful man in Mr. McCloy's “cabinet,” if you wish. McCloy had nominally a Deputy High Commissioner,

but Shep Stone was really the most powerful man and he was active in fields quite beyond USIA. For instance, he would arrange dinners that McCloy had with leading German businessmen. I remember once interpreting for eight hours straight through such a lunch and dinner—and Shep Stone had arranged it all. Anyway, that was the PAO setup which essentially was the same that we had when we then had the changeover from the State Department to USIA. It really meant no practical change in Germany at all.

Q: I would like to go back a minute to the time in 1945, early '46, when you were setting up RIAS. Who were the people who actually set up the mechanics of the station itself and got it underway?

LOCHNER: There were only a few Americans and they got a hold of German experts. By that time many of the politically clean Germans who had worked for the Russians were sick of working for the Russians, so there was no difficulty getting qualified personnel. I am not sure whether Bill Heimlich was technically the first head of RIAS, but I think he was. Then there were a succession of other Americans—Ruth Norden, Ed Schechter who later was the control officer at Radio Munich. It was hierarchically an American-controlled operation. I don't think they ever had more than five or six Americans. During my seven and a half years as RIAS Director I had six other Americans. But de facto it was always a joint American-German operation, built very much on trust, and the actual working positions at the station were all filled by Germans. We essentially acted as controllers, supervisors, whatever you want to call it.

Q: I gather your next really major function was the Neue Zeitung so why don't you pick it up from there and go on.

1945: Birth Of Radio Frankfurt And Eventual Turnover To Germans

LOCHNER: First, let me go back for a minute to Radio Frankfurt time. Very early on General Clay pressured us all to turnover the actual radio functions to Germans. So I had started out in Bad Nauheim which is north of Frankfurt to where the Nazis had evacuated

Radio Frankfurt because of the air attacks. Under very primitive conditions we built up this news service for the four US zone stations. Since the end of the war these four US controlled radio stations had received their news from ABSIE, American Broadcasting Service in Europe—Radio Luxembourg after the liberation. General Clay, as I say, wanted the operations to be turned over to the Germans. So I was hired to set up a news room in Bad Nauheim for the four US zone stations and it was pretty hopeless at that stage in the Fall of 1945 to find clean Germans with any kind of journalist experience in a small place like Bad Nauheim. I had a terrible time in the beginning. I sent out a cry for help and so they sent down several of the staffers from ABSIE, which I think was being dissolved at that time. Among the prominent ones I got was the son of Thomas Mann, Golo Mann. For the first few weeks we really had to do all the shows ourselves because it was so difficult to find qualified Germans.

Communists In Radio Frankfurt

We finally moved back to Frankfurt and then, during the next three years, we turned over all the functions to the Germans. One interesting aspect at Radio Frankfurt was that the brilliant chief editor was a known communist. In 1945 when we looked for German personnel the only criterion was that they hadn't been a Nazi. This man was Jewish and had lived in Switzerland in exile. He was a brilliant man, in fact, I would call him the most brilliant German I ever met—Hans Mayer is his name. He is still active although he is in his 80s. He became our chief editor because he was extremely well qualified. Everything worked well until in March, 1947 he came to me with an evening commentary on Tito having shot down an American plane. He came to me as control officer who had to technically okay all political manuscripts with a commentary which entirely took Tito's side. We had a very good relationship. I said, “Look, Dr. Mayer. We are a US controlled station now, you can't possibly ask me to pass this. Can't you, and I tried to give him an out, really not comment but explain this is the American point of view, and this is the Yugoslav point of view?” He pouted and said, “Well, I thought you were supposed to teach

us how a democratic radio station works—free expression and all that." It was the only act of censorship I ever applied. That was a commentary I couldn't pass.

Q: Did you know he was a communist?

LOCHNER: Yes, of course. We knew from the start when he was hired. He never made any bones about it. And it worked fine, as I say, from the fall of 1945 to the spring of 1947. It then turned out that he really wanted to have an excuse to break, because he went from there to Leipzig and for many years was one of the most impressive intellectuals the communist regime had.

We had two other prominent communists who also went to East Berlin, but until the day they left we really never had any problems with them.

Radio Frankfurt was the first station turned over by General Clay to German management in January of 1949. I was in a kind of personal race with Ed Schechter who was control officer of Radio Munich. He wanted rather desperately to have the honor of having his station turned over first. I went to General Clay, whose interpreter I was during his whole period as Military Governor and said, "General I have never asked you for a favor, but now I am asking you for a favor, namely to turn my station over to the Germans first." Which he did. I stayed on a few weeks, at General Clay's request, to head the new station management team. The station manager was in place—we had selected him long before—but the turnover to German control meant that under the land law of the State of Hesse, which set up Radio Frankfurt, the name was changed to Hessischer Rundfunk (Hessian Radio), they had a radio council and an administrative council and I accompanied them the first few weeks to help break them in. That was the end of our role in Radio Frankfurt.

1949-52: Lochner Sets Up And Manages Neue Zeitung Frankfurt Edition

It so happened at the same time the Neue Zeitung, the official organ of military government, a newspaper in the German language, with editions in Munich and Berlin,

was to open a new edition in Frankfurt. Up until then its distribution had been purely within the US zone, but General Clay, or somebody else, I don't know, decided that with the American and British zones merging more and more, we should also distribute our paper in the British zone, which was okay with the British, and that couldn't be done from Munich. Therefore a new edition was set up in Frankfurt and I was selected to be the chief editor. Again it was fairly difficult to recruit a German staff, but from then, something like from '49 to '52, I was chief editor of the Frankfurt edition.

Q: Did the French object to the distribution of that paper in their occupation zone? LOCHNER: No. The main thrust was the British zone, but we did cover the French zone as well out of Frankfurt because in terms of train connections it was much easier to get to Baden- Baden and all these cities whereas from Munich you would have had to cross the mountains. So we very definitely also distributed it in the French zone.

Three years later the two editions, Munich and Frankfurt, were merged in Frankfurt partly as an economy measure because the Neue Zeitung was always a money losing proposition. It had no advertising and under the difficult accounting rules of the U.S. Government income from the sale of the paper was not credited to the Neue Zeitung, but went into general funds so the paper showed up as a horrible deficit.

When the papers merged Hans Wallenberg, who was both publisher and chief editor of the Munich edition came up to Frankfurt.

Like so much in early military government, the Neue Zeitung was a rather strange animal. It had three editions and they were very largely independent of each other. We had our own editorials in Frankfurt, we took or did not take those offered by the Munich edition, but the Munich edition was the principal one in the sense that we received as mats all the pages on art, literature and so on that could be prepared a day before hand. We in Frankfurt prepared all the news pages, of course, our own editorial page, and then we had special regional pages for the four editions—the British zone, the French zone, the

larger area of Hesse and the city edition for the city of Frankfurt. But I must say that you would think this was a built-in catastrophe to have three chief editors, but on the whole it worked very well. We did have our disputes once in a while, but it worked well and the Neue Zeitung was respected by the German fraternity of journalists as a model paper. It could be that only because it had the kind of independence you would normally not attribute to a paper put out by a military government. I suppose behind that was, among others, the liberal attitude of General Clay who was brilliant enough to know that if papers like that were to be a model for the Germans they must not be kept on a short leash by the military government.

With One Exception Neue Zeitung Never Used To Promote U.S. Policy Or Otherwise Seek ToInfluence German Opinion

Q: I want to ask about the content of these papers. Were you just basically dispensing news— you did have an editorial section—were you trying to get across some of the themes that the Occupation and later the High Commissioner wanted to get across to the German population? Were you doing a...I don't want to use the word propaganda, but I think you know what I mean.

LOCHNER: The Neue Zeitung was from the start to be a model of what a new post Nazi free German newspaper was to be, so it was a complete newspaper with all the sections, with the structure that a German paper had, and, of course, it had the advantage, particularly in the earliest years, of being able to attract the cream of non-Nazi German journalists, if for no other reason than we offered a warm meal. That was in the early Occupation up until the currency reform and the take off of the German economy in '48. It was a very major criteria. So we were at a great advantage compared to the newly licensed German newspapers.

We never were under any pressure from anybody to be a propaganda organ. We were told to be a model for the German press so, of course, we didn't go out of our way to offer

criticism of US policy. That we avoided. But we didn't do the reverse. We didn't try to sell things. I will give you the only incident where I was personally involved where you might say the Neue Zeitung was used as an official organ. That was when after we got into the Korean War there was this sudden change of attitude toward German rearmament. There was, rightly or wrongly, the feeling that the Germans, too, had to contribute. So, Shep Stone, who was my immediate superior, asked me to have a long session with him, Mr. McCloy and some military expert. On the strength of that he asked me to write an article which went into the paper unsigned with three stars. The lead said, “The following article is based on conversations with leading members of the US High Commission.” In essence I tried to explain why the Germans had to rearm. It caused a sensation at the time, because for three years we had tried to tell the Germans that they must never bear arms again. So this was a real switch and the fact that it appeared in the Neue Zeitung was, of course, recognized by German politicians as reflecting US policy, despite “the following article is based on”—I mean, they were not stupid. They knew this was... That is the only occasion that I can recall in my three years where you might say the Military Government used the Neue Zeitung. I know no other case. Anyhow this was, as far as the journalistic form was concerned, perfectly proper and reconcilable with an independent newspaper. You might call it a scoop we had. It was not an abuse in the sense that the paper advocated it as an editorial. It was not written up as an editorial, but as a big four column story on the editorial page.

German Reaction To Neue Zeitung Article Suggesting A Degree Of German Rearmament

Q: What was the general reaction of the German public to that article?

LOCHNER: Very considerable discussion in the German press. A lot of expressions of dismay that after such a short period we urged rearmament, after all it was just a few years since the end of the war. It was recognized as a signal from the U.S. McCloy was asked at press conferences and he sort of toned it down. The whole thing was kind of a trial balloon and was one of many steps to prepare the Germans, more or less, gently, I would say less

gently, because this was rather direct and caught them completely unaware. Later you had speeches by the Secretary of State, etc. that if the Germans wanted us to protect them, they had to contribute to their own protection and all the familiar arguments. But in that sense, it hit the German public really quite unprepared.

Q: Do you think they were unhappy about that arrangement, about the turn of American policy or potential turn?

LOCHNER: Yes, at the time there was very little stomach from Adenauer on down for building up any kind of, be it ever so modest, German military force again. But, in the end I would say they accepted the reasoning and then came NATO and everything else. But this transition was rather abrupt.

Q: At what point did the Neue Zeitung go out of business?

LOCHNER: Only two more years, I am not clear now on the exact date, after I left and became head of the press section at the High Commission. The paper folded altogether and there is a very good reason for it. Let me say first, that the British zone official paper, Die Welt, still one of the major German newspapers...

Q: How do you spell that?

LOCHNER: W-e-l-t. It means world. That was the official organ of the British military government like Neue Zeitung was ours. That was turned over to Axel Springer, a very prominent German publisher [he died about four years ago]. He was interested in it because Die Welt was a viable paper from the commercial point of view. It was concentrated in cities in the Ruhr, in Hamburg, etc. The Neue Zeitung could not be turned over even as a gift to any German private publisher because from the distribution point of view it was an absolute nightmare. We had a total circulation of one or two hundred thousand scattered to the extent that in many villages there were four subscribers and you just couldn't make a commercially viable paper out of that. We tried like the British. A

lot of German journalists who respected the Neue Zeitung very highly would have been delighted to take it over, but when they came to take a look at the commercial side of it, it was utterly hopeless. It was scattered throughout the whole Western three occupation zones. Die Welt, by contrast never tried to expand into the American or French zones.

So that is why it was closed down in West Germany. In Berlin it went on—there again you will have to check with somebody else as to how long—for some time, but not terribly long either.

Q: Was there ever any reason from a policy standpoint, not wishing to turn what had clearly been an American newspaper over to the Germans? Was there anyone who really wanted to take it over, say in Berlin?

LOCHNER: In Berlin I am not clear because it was not my field. I understand that the circulation was very small by the time it closed down—but I am not sure.

Let me say this. The Neue Zeitung had outlived its function, because by that time there was an excellent post war independent German press. Our licensing system, I should say, worked overall splendidly.

Process Of Establishing And Licensing Of New, Strictly German Newspaper

Q: Could you just give a few words about the licensing system because Ed Schechter mentioned it in his interview but didn't describe it too completely?

LOCHNER: At the end of the war, of course, all newspaper publishing ceased. Nobody would have dreamed of letting any paper continue under the name it had in Nazi time, even the famous Frankfurter Zeitung which was the most prestigious German newspaper before the Nazi system. So what we did in all three Western occupation zones was to license people to publish a new newspaper. It was very hard to find qualified licensees because anybody who had worked as a journalist under the Nazis was obviously out.

You had a few people who survived in other countries, like our Dr. Mayer in Switzerland—a highly trained journalist who became our chief editor, Radio Frankfurt. So in most cases they took clean politicians who had been in jail, or people, like Adenauer wasn't a publisher himself, but President Heuss for instance started out as one of the newspaper licensees. These were people who were politically clean because they had been in jail or had emigrated. They did find a few qualified journalists but those permits to publish a paper didn't seem like a big deal at the time. Only after currency reform did they turn out to be very valuable property. In effect, the licensees became the proprietors of the new newspapers.

One of the very interesting things we did, i.e. the U.S. Government did, and I was personally involved in it during my time as head of the press section of the High Commission, was to help the newly licensed papers after currency reform when the process of denazification had run its course and many of the Nazi owners of printing plants, into which we had simply put these new licensees—where there were printing plants that were intact we hadn't asked who owned them, in fact just because they were Nazi owned we put the licensees in and nobody worried about it for the next three years—began to return. It dawned on us that the independence of these new licensed papers was going to be jeopardized if the publisher became again the old Nazi owner of the print shop. So we set up a revolving fund called the GARIOA Fund. GARIOA stood for Government and Relief in Occupied Areas—that preceded the State Department, that was already done during the US Army period. Into this revolving fund all licensees had to put a modest sum which in the valueless Reichsmark time, before currency reform, didn't hurt anybody. That was to be a fund out of which loans were made. But it became important only after currency reform. I don't know through what tricks we managed to convert our GARIOA Fund at much better than the official exchange rate of initially 100 Reichsmark for 6 # new D-mark. I literally do not know how we did it, but we managed to save all our GARIOA funds. I wouldn't swear it was one for one, but I had a very nice kitty to operate from. During this time I became the head of a committee consisting of myself and four prominent

German publishers and we allocated low interest loans on a revolving basis to newspapers who were threatened because they didn't have their own print shop. Through this device we saved the independence of some of the top newspapers still in existence today. I think it was among the most productive things we did in this period.

Q: Did the publishers of the new papers then set up their own print shops or did they buy them from the Nazi owners?

LOCHNER: Both. Sometimes they bought out the Nazi owners, sometimes they set up new printing plants. These loans were extremely important to them because they couldn't ever get a loan from a bank. They had nothing. They had no collateral and the banks charged a very high interest. We, of course, required no collateral and I think we charged 1 # percent—I am not sure of the exact figure, but it was like a gift. And it was on a revolving fund basis, so as they set up their independence, others would get a chance.

Only One New Paper Went Sour

I can't give you the total number of papers we helped, but what I can mention of interest is that in the whole period there was only one case which went sour and that was quite interesting. It was a paper in a smaller town in the American zone call Fulda. The licensee was anything but a communist, but despite our loan, he was in financial trouble. So at night, with curtains drawn, he printed some communist pamphlets on a job printing basis. He had nothing to do with it politically. The political situation was such that when that became public it was impossible for us to continue. We had to yank that particular loan back. It is the only case that went sour. I can name specific big papers, Frankfurter Rundschau, Tagespiegel in Berlin, the Sueddeutsche Zeitung in Munich, all of which got loans from us, all of whom acknowledge that this saved their independence. So I would say among the productive things we did during the High Commission times, that, in my mind, stands out.

Q: When the Neue Zeitung went out of business, where did you go?

1952: Neue Zeitung Ceases Publication; Lochner Becomes Head Of Press Division, Public Affairs Office Of HICOG; Functions Of Division

LOCHNER: I became head of the press division of the Public Affairs Office of the High Commission in Bonn, directly under Shep Stone, who was the PAO. Our work then was, of course, much larger than that, say, of a press attach# in an embassy, because the High Commissioner still in many ways ran the country. Not as much as Clay had. By that time you had, of course, Adenauer in as Chancellor, but we were still in a position where the High Commission was much more than an embassy. I had, I think, something like 80 employees alone in my press section. To list what we did—we prepared the wireless bulletin, of course; we had a feature service called Amerika Dienst, America Service, a regular feature service in various fields which we distributed to the German newspapers.

Then we had a very high class publication, monthly I believe, analyzing East European documents on a very scholarly basis—translating key articles into German. Then we put out a daily summary of the press for the political section of the embassy, of course. We put out some special pamphlets in various fields. Off hand I can't think of anything else, but it was a pretty large operation.

Q: Did you have an established magazine publication at that time?

LOCHNER: Only this analysis of East European publications. It was called Eastern Europe.

So that went on for three years and more or less by coincidence I left Germany at the end of the technical occupation period in 1955 and was then transferred to Saigon where I was first deputy PAO and then PAO.

Q: Can you speak a little bit about the Saigon period? The French were still in control weren't they or had Dien Bien Phu come just before that?

1955: To Saigon As Deputy PAO—Soon PAO; USIS Functioned Virtually As Vietnam'sInformation Ministry

LOCHNER: I got to Saigon in September, 1955. The division of the country, of course, had happened at Geneva in 1954. But the place had just simmered down very shortly before I got there. President Diem had defeated the river pirates, the Binh Xuyen, and the army of the Cao Dai. So outwardly things seemed pretty quiet in Vietnam. I will say first, that in my two years there, because it was a hardship post—I confess that while it was a fascinating experience I was happy to leave after two years—I, of course, never felt remotely as useful as I felt in Germany with my being bilingual and with my background. I am to this day a strong believer in regional specialization. I felt totally out of place. At best, shall we say, the last half year I felt halfway useful. What added to this feeling was that there was so abominably little language talent in the USIS operation. It was a gigantic operation. I had 32 other Americans and 200 Vietnamese. We, in effect, were the information ministry for the new Diem government. As everyone knows, the French left behind no trained personnel in almost any field. The few, so-called information specialists the new government had were former communists who had defected for whatever reason and joined the new Diem government. So they were utterly helpless. We prepared the weekly newsreel for the movie theaters. We did most of their radio broadcasting. We did all the pamphlets. We had mobile theater groups moving around the country with some kind of political message. So, in essence, we were the Vietnamese information ministry.

Shortcomings Of USIS Staff In Saigon—Especially Lack Of Linguistic Capability

Now among the 31 other Americans on my staff, there was one who spoke Vietnamese. Typically, he had grown up in China as a son of a missionary with fluent Chinese. He had two years in Hanoi before the division of the country, during which, being a good linguist

he had picked up Vietnamese which is apparently sufficiently related to Chinese so that if you speak one you can learn the other. John Donnell was his name. I once said only half in jest to my ambassador, “You know you could really send me and the 30 other Americans home because this one guy speaking Vietnamese is so much more effective than all of us put together.” If we wanted anything from the Vietnamese Information Ministry, we would send John Donnell and they would roll all over themselves with delight to have an American come and speak fluent Vietnamese to them. And here is the sad end of the story of John Donnell. He'd had two years in Hanoi. After the two years in Saigon he was assigned another two years in Saigon—and it was a hardship post where everybody else, including myself, served two years only. At the end of six years, he asked for a nice post like Paris, because he spoke fluent French, too. What happened? They assigned him to Vientiane which was the end of the line. People would come for rest and recreation to Saigon from Vientiane. So what happened? He resigned from the Foreign Service. That is how we treated the one Vietnamese specialist after six years. It still outrages me today to lose such a good man.

So, among the other USIS Americans, there were only two besides myself who spoke French. The others, of course, spoke neither French nor Vietnamese. At that time all educated Vietnamese had gone to French schools and universities, so at least with my French I could certainly communicate with the Information Minister and people like that. But the others didn't have any language capacity at all. I thought that was one of the reasons we were not more effective than we could have been. To deviate for a moment, in my opinion much of the later catastrophe of our involvement in Vietnam was in part due to language difficulty. When you saw the unqualified Vietnamese who acted as translators you could tear your hair out. You could just see how many misunderstandings arose simply due to language difficulties.

Q: You partly answered the question I was going to ask you. If nobody on the American side spoke adequate Vietnamese, how in the world did you get your stuff translated? If you did get it translated how did you know it was done correctly?

LOCHNER: Precisely. We did have some Vietnamese staffers whose English appeared very good. But, of course, outside of John Donnell, there was nobody ever to control the final product. He didn't have time to read every pamphlet.

I would say this much for the whole two years, that we were all quite optimistic in the sense we thought with Ngo Dinh Diem there was a viable alternative to Ho Chi Minh, after all Diem was not tainted with colonialism, he had been in the US in exile. We felt that South Vietnam had a chance to make it on its own. It was not over populated. It had wonderful natural resources, rice, rubber—the French created all these superb rubber plantations—and with our help and, particularly economic help, South Vietnam could make a go of it. So in my two years, I would say I would never have foreshadowed how in the end catastrophe would envelop us there.

Q: The so-called dragon lady, Madame Nu, had she come into prominence yet?

The Famous, Later Infamous, Madam Nu Was Brilliant And Capable; No Dinh Diem EarlyIn His Presidency Seemed Capable Of Success But Inability To Delegate Led To Downfall

LOCHNER: Oh yes, indeed. In fact, I had the pleasure on many official occasions to sit next to Madame Nu. She was one of the most brilliant and attractive ladies I have ever encountered. You see, Ngo Dinh Diem, among his many weaknesses, when he went around the country he would drag the whole diplomatic corps with him. After a while our ambassador got sick of doing it. I was one of the cabinet rank people as PAO so he sent me along. Through some rule of their protocol I wound up often at the ceremonial dinners next to Madame Nu. I must say I got to admire her very much. I had a very good personal

impression of Ngo Dinh Diem, himself, too. He was quite sympathique, except he couldn't delegate. He worked 18 hours a day and he tried to do it all himself. And here I come to a specific frustration of my USIA work. Among other things, of course, we had an exchange program. So we selected a considerable number of Vietnamese students to go to the US through all the normal procedure. That particular year, the fall was approaching and they didn't get their exit permits. So the ambassador sent me over to the Chef de Cabinet, who under the French system was the number two man under Diem, to goose him so that they should let these students out. So I went over and told him that this was terrible, college was opening and everything else was done except for the exit permit and couldn't he issue them. The man threw up his hand in horror and said, “The President reserves that unto himself.” So Diem would personally handle any exit permit of any Vietnamese leaving the country. He personally stamped every passport of every foreign diplomat who came to Saigon. So if you want an explanation of why his government did not succeed you can find it right there. The Chef de Cabinet was absolutely adamant that he could not do anything about it and we lost several slots because they just wouldn't come through with this technicality. These people had been screened up and down. It was inexcusable that they would not issue the permits. But that was among the more frustrating aspects. As I said, otherwise it was in a sense fun doing their weekly news reel, doing all these pamphlets, so I won't say that we at all foreshadowed, so to speak, that all this would go down the drain in the end.

During those two years from 1955 to '57 things really looked up in Saigon.

Lochner Disagrees With The Then Broadly Held View That Madame Nu Manipulated The Government

Q: Well, since you weren't there this might be an impossible question for you to answer, but what finally got Madame Nu into the kind of position where she was apparently usurping the government and mostly running things behind the scenes? Do you have any guesses on that?

LOCHNER: I don't agree with that thesis and I don't think there is unanimity among historians by now on that. Of course, it was really, at least during my time, much more her husband, Ngo Dinh Nu, who was the power behind the throne. But yet in all the encounters that I saw when the two were with Diem, they always seemed to defer to him. I never had the feeling that either her husband nor she were running Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem relied on both of them, maybe to excess, but that is different from saying that they were the power behind the throne.

1958: Assigned To VOA, Washington, Ultimately As Head Of European Division

Q: I guess we have pretty much covered your tour in Vietnam. Where did you go next and what were your duties there?

LOCHNER: Well I suppose to certain people on the administrative side of USIA it was an outrage that I had been overseas for 12 years and hadn't had a single tour in Washington.

Q: There is a statutory requirement that you come back, I think after eight years.

LOCHNER: I was overdue for a tour in Washington so I was assigned for a few weeks only as head of the German Service of VOA and then I moved up to the West European section and within a few months I became head of the European Division of the Voice and stayed there for three years. There isn't very much to say about that time. Nothing terribly dramatic happened there between '58 and '61, but I will mention one very unpleasant episode.

The Performance Ratings Ordeal—And The Episode With Alexander Barmine

Until then the domestic ratings had never been taken as seriously as the overseas ratings. It was reflected in the fact that the form was very much shorter and you really had to fill out just a few things, whereas as supervisor in overseas jobs I had to go through this to me rather unpleasant procedure of pages that you had to fill out about you and section

colleagues, including the performance rating of the wives. Young wives today would screamingly refuse.

Q: Not only that, they would flunk.

LOCHNER: At that time the wives had to be socially active, etc. Anyhow, one year Henry Loomis decided that the ratings at VOA should be taken as seriously as the Foreign Service ratings. As head of the European Division, among others, I had to rate General Barmine, the legendary head of the Russian Service. Between Loomis as VOA Director and myself as Division chief, stood Barry Zorthian as Program director, and as such, the reviewing officer of my rating. I looked at past ratings that others had made of Barmine and, of course, they were only 100 percent greatest Russian expert, etc. Barmine was difficult. He was obstreperous in staff meetings. All of this I was aware of, but before sitting down to the painful job of suddenly writing a realistic rating I said to Barry Zorthian, “Look, this won't do any good. He is going to be outraged if I say one critical word. The idea of ratings is to prepare people for promotion and Barmine isn't going anywhere. He wouldn't want to be promoted. He is the Russian Service.” My prediction was all too accurate. Barry Zorthian insisted, “Well, I think you have a point, but Henry decided that was what we have to do so you better.” I said, “I am sorry, I refuse.” So I gave the same bland rating that all my predecessors had given Barmine. So Barry, as reviewing officer, in essence said that this rating is not quite complete. All the positive things are true about his Soviet expertise, but from the point of view of team player, etc. he is often obstreperous and that kind of thing. Barmine, of course, entitled to see the rating, hit the ceiling and instigated one of these review procedures where a panel is set up. There were three days of just, to me, utterly futile hearings and I was caught in the middle because Barry would cite me in support of the difficult behavior and Barmine would cite me in support of his expertise, etc. So it was most disagreeable and, as I accurately predicted, led to absolutely nothing. Aided by the fact that just then Barmine had taught Nixon a few Russian words for the famous kitchen debate, plus the fact that Barmine had many friends up on the Hill whom he obviously mobilized, I can only surmise that pressure was brought from the top. The

panel came to one of these Solomonic judgments which permitted both Loomis and Barmine to claim they won. It led to nothing and just caused a lot of hard feelings and three of the most miserable days I had during my three years in Washington.

Q: Did both the adverse and laudatory statements stay in the record or did they dispense with the more critical parts?

LOCHNER: Frankly because of, perhaps Freudian suppression, I do not remember the details as to what the final text was. I remember the result that both left arguing that they won. That was the end of it. Barmine, of course stayed on. Did he finally die in office or did he retire?

Q: I can't remember for sure, but I think he had retired. He got so old he practically had to retire.

LOCHNER: He was such a unique person. Since the purpose of the ratings is to prepare people for promotion, it was to me so utterly useless to go through all this. Well, I just mention it because I don't want to give the impression that I had only pleasant times in USIA all these years. But outside of that I can't think of any particularly negative experience. I will say that I found the annual program reviews rather painful and having 18 services in the division I had to go through this that many times each year. This seemed to me to lead to a degree of conformism which was basically counterproductive. The services, particularly these East European emigr#s, felt very insecure and were desperately afraid that something adverse would come out. The way these review panels operated there were always some, to me, totally humorless bureaucrats who went through the translations of the scripts. Each service had to translate three days of some date in the past so that they couldn't prepare particularly nice shows. There were these types who had to find something wrong and they would go through these translations with a fine tooth comb. It seemed to me often terribly, terribly petty. They held the script against the guidance of that date. Of course it was always easy to pick out some minor discrepancy.

I thought very little of that whole exercise. On the other hand, in all honesty, I can not say that I know of a better system. There had to be some check on what these esoteric languages were doing where often there was no native born American at all who was familiar with the language, I concede. But it didn't strike me as a good system at that time. I do not know whether the system is still in use.

The Rooney Episode

Q: During that time when you were head of the European Division did you ever have any internal squabbles when some of the linguistic groups who have their contacts on the Hill and would bring pressure to bear one way or another. There was always a certain number of battles among linguists.

LOCHNER: No, I can't recall any. However, in somewhat related context I can recall one unpleasant experience. As head of the European Division I had to go to the annual Independence Day receptions of the three Baltic countries which still had embassies in Washington. At one of them I ran into Congressman Rooney and it appeared that, I wasn't even aware of it, a few days before the Voice had reduced the rebroadcasting time of the three Baltic services to a certain extent. Rooney, who apparently had a large Lithuanian constituency was immediately alerted and when he heard that I was from VOA he screamed at me, “Ah, you are one of those bastards from the Voice. If you guys think you are going to get one further nickel out of me after you have emasculated [or whatever word he used], the Baltic services you are very mistaken.” All this in front of other people. Of course, true to instructions never to get into an argument with a congressman, certainly not at our level at the Agency, I just had to stand there and grin and bear it. Needless to say it was a very unpleasant experience.

But outside of that and the hearing concerning General Barmine I can't think of any unpleasant experiences or squabbles within the Division. It was remarkable given all these esoteric languages and different background. Perhaps I was just lucky.

1961: Assignment To Copenhagen Aborted; Assigned As Director, RIAS, in Berlin

Q: After that you went back to Europe and you mentioned that you had been studying Danish first thinking you were going to Copenhagen.

LOCHNER: I had three months of Danish language training at the Sands school. Eight hours a day and I hated every minute of it. I was supposed to go to Copenhagen as PAO. All preparations were made: we had our plane tickets, we had given up the house, I had paid my courtesy call on the Danish Ambassador in Washington. The day before our scheduled departure, I was called into the Director's office and told to hold everything as I may be going to RIAS. What happened was that when the new Democratic Administration came in everybody thought that Henry Loomis who was an avowed Republican would be out and Barry Zorthian would become head of the Voice. Well, Henry made his peace with the new Administration and stayed. Barry didn't want to continue as number three and asked for a transfer to the Foreign Service. At that time at least, I don't know how it is today, the position as program director, as that of division chiefs, had to be filled by Foreign Service officers, but they had to have radio experience and there weren't that many around. Under the circumstances there were only two possibilities.

One, unfortunately I can't remember the name, had been the head of the Asian division of the Voice and had just recently been transferred to Hong Kong and it was feared that if he were called back that Rooney, or somebody else with his usual heavy humor at the annual budget hearing would say: “Now I see here you sent, costing so much, Mr. X with family and furniture to Hong Kong and six weeks later you pull him back. Now what kind of personnel management is this?”

The other possibility was Alex Klieforth, the Director of RIAS, who providentially was due to come home on home leave, but home leave only because RIAS was not a position where you rotated people out after two years. He was tagged, but the head of the US Mission in Berlin, the State Department man, of course, Alan Lightner for a whole week

bitterly resisted this transfer of Alex Klieforth. He later told me that he didn't know me, it wasn't anything personal. He knew a good man and knew that a position like RIAS director shouldn't be rotated routinely every two years. It took a whole week during which time I was under ironclad instructions not even to mention to my closest friends what was going on and that I might be going to Berlin. This put me in a very awkward position. I reported at 1776 for work after having said goodby to people. It wasn't very long after the McCarthy period and people wondered why I was still around. I would mumble something about a short delay. So it was an awkward week but well worth it. Needless to say when it finally worked out Lightner had to give in to the political requirements at the Voice and Klieforth was made Program Director of the Voice. RIAS was such an infinitely more attractive assignment to me than being PAO in Copenhagen. In retrospect that week was a very small price to pay.

April, 1961: Appointed Director Of RIAS In Berlin

I arrived in April of 1961 and within six months was to experience one of the highlights of my career, the Wall going up and, of course, the visit of Edward R. Murrow.

Q: I would like you to go into some detail on this because we only have one other person who had reported on this situation, and that is Al Hemsing and I would like to have a pretty extensive discussion of what went on.

Ed Murrow Arrives In Berlin Shortly Before Berlin Wall Goes Up; Germans Assumed MurrowKnew Of Wall In Advance

LOCHNER: Ed Murrow's arrival in West Berlin late in the evening of August 12, 1961 was taken then and is still taken today by many Berlin politicians and media representatives as proof that the United States knew about the Wall going up. This played a big role in Berlin at the time because Germans would have felt even more betrayed if they had been convinced that the US knew about it and did nothing about it. I would, of course, protest to my contacts that it was pure coincidence that Ed Murrow arrived a few hours before

the Wall went up. That he was due on a routine inspection trip of what was after all the biggest overseas installation of the US Information Agency. But they would meet that with snickering remarks such as, “C'mon now. Ed Murrow, the man who was known always to be where the action is, he arrives accidentally the night before the Wall? Don't give us that.”

I will digress here for a moment to show how important this issue was. Another so called proof besides Ed Murrow's providential appearance at that moment was supposedly John McCloy's—by that time Director of the World Bank—meeting with Khrushchev on the Black Sea a few weeks before the Wall and being tipped off. That is another rumor that spread all over Germany as proof of our duplicity in a way—that we knew about it.

Years later—I had been McCloy's interpreter for three years and had such a relationship with him that I know he would never lie to me—when we were alone I asked him about it. He said flatly that there is not one word of truth in the rumor.

So all these alleged proofs of our having known about the Wall collapsed. There is, of course, no proof. We in the US Mission certainly had the feeling that the Communists had to do something to staunch the ever increasing flow of refugees. In the last week it went up from 1,000 a day to 3,000 a day. You might say in retrospect that the East Germans sensed more accurately than we that something drastic was about to happen because why did they in panic leave their country in those increased numbers.

Anyhow, back to Ed Murrow. We had picked him up at the airport and took him to the guest house and talked over the plans of the next day with him. I had proposed, and he gladly accepted that instead of going to the US Mission, it being a Sunday anyhow, and going through a dreary briefing which always consisted of some army major in front of some charts with a lot of arrows showing what the US forces would do if the Russians invaded, etc., that we meet at my house with an English speaking young East Berlin teacher for a two-hour talk about the situation in East Germany. Well, that of course was

out. Since he had arrived very late I did not get home until ten minutes to twelve and was just undressing when on the direct phone I had to RIAS I was alerted at one minute past midnight that the East Berlin radio, which of course RIAS monitored, had started to announce, not the wall as such, but that communications within the city were cut. Within fifteen minutes I was down at the station as were all of my American colleagues and leading German staff. We immediately changed the program, in fact the announcer had done so after the RIAS midnight news, to serious music. We carried news every 15 minutes also. And three times during the night I went over to East Berlin because my Germans, of course, couldn't go. It was a very warm summer night, but because we didn't know what reception we would get I hid a tape recorder under a coat. There was nothing heroic about it, at worst they would have turned us back too. I was going in a State Department car and as they didn't that first night try to control any papers, when they saw the license plate they waved us through. So three times during the night I went and simply drove around and recorded on tape what was going on, i.e., reported from the Eastern side and it was broadcast.

The most unforgettable and depressing sight was on the third trip about 10 in the morning. I got out of the car for the first time at Friedrich Strasse Station, which later became the cross over point both for Germans and foreigners who did not enter by car, and the vast waiting hall was full of thousands of people milling around with desperate faces, cardboard boxes, some with suitcases. On the staircase leading up to the elevator train, the black-shirted Trapos, Transport police, who vaguely reminded me of the SS, they had virtually the same uniforms, stood locked elbow to elbow blocking access to the staircase going up. As I was standing there observing the scene, a pitiful old woman timidly walked up to one of them, they were standing about three steps up, and asked when was the next train due for West Berlin. I will never forget the sneering tone in which the guy answered: “That is all over—you are all sitting in a mousetrap now.”

Later on we found that among these desperate people milling around there were innumerable cases where so as not to make it too obvious say father and daughter had

taken a train—that is all it took at the time to defect—on Saturday and mother and son were due to follow on Sunday. Innumerable families were separated that day and in some cases it took years before with Red Cross intervention they were reunited. I have never seen as large a group of miserable human beings as these thousands of people. Most of them had not heard the radio and came to the station thinking they were taking the train to West Berlin.

Q: Had any construction on the Wall begun at that point?

LOCHNER: Oh, yes. The Wall, of course, started with work crews tearing up the street and laying rows of barbed wire.

Q: That had started the night before...?

LOCHNER: Beginning midnight, but these people coming to the station were not aware of that.

Q: My question, I guess, is when was it that Ed Murrow got out on the scene and was watching the beginning of the construction?

LOCHNER: Ah, that came later in the afternoon. I am still in the night when the Wall went up— my third visit at 10 in the morning.

Now to return to Ed. The plan of having the East German come to my home was obviously out. Ed said he would like to go over and have a look for himself. In the early afternoon, Jim Hoofnagle, who was the PAO from Bonn, Al Hemsing, who was the Berlin PAO, and I took Ed in a State Department car to East Berlin and drove around. At his request we ended up at the Adlon Hotel which had been very famous before the war right next to the Brandenburg Gate where he had been many times as a correspondent with my father, among others, who was head of the AP office in Berlin. We sat down in the only surviving rear wing of the Adlon Hotel, the rest had been destroyed in the air war. As we sat there

drinking lousy warm East German beer, Ed reminisced a little about his early experiences in Berlin. Through the open window we could hear press hammers tearing up the street and see the construction crew members, each with a soldier with a gun behind him to prevent him from defecting, tearing up the street and laying these rolls of barbed wire. On the other side, one yard away—West Berlin—hundreds, if not thousands, frustrated West Berliners shouting their outrage and demanding that the wire be removed. We could hear such shouts clearly and I translated some of them for Ed Murrow. That was a very discouraging situation to be in.

One of those little details one remembers, Jim Hoofnagle tried to pay in East German money for the beer and that first day, already, they started collecting only in West Marks.

From Berlin we drove to the reception given by either Minister Lightner or PAO Hemsing, I can't remember which. It was the usual reception given for a man of cabinet rank like Ed Murrow with all the leading politicians, etc. from Berlin. What is most memorable to me about that reception was that at one stage Ed Murrow asked me to arrange for his calling the President. The security people took him upstairs to the bedroom for the call. In reports over the years since then I have heard from people like American history professors, (I occasionally give talks in Berlin to such groups) that apparently historians are pretty much agreed that that phone call from Ed Murrow was really the first one to alert President Kennedy to the full seriousness of the situation. Not seriousness that a Russian invasion was threatened, but the devastating impact on the West Berliners' morale. I have also heard it said that in that phone call the idea was born that six days later Kennedy sent Vice President Johnson and more important to the Berliners, General Clay, the hero of the airlift, to Berlin. From my own participation I know that that was very effective indeed in sort of stopping the erosion of morale among the West Berliners. Of course it was combined with the gesture of sending an additional brigade up from West Germany. It was above all the appearance by General Clay who several weeks later was sent back by President Kennedy to be in Berlin with the Berliners for a longer period that was most reassuring to the Berliners. It was a rather peculiar situation for all of us to have General

Clay, a four-star general, formally in Berlin as the adviser of a two-star general. This is probably unprecedented in the annuals of the military—a four-star general being an adviser of a two-star general. We all knew that General Clay was pulling the strings, but he stayed completely in the background during the few months he was in Berlin.

The second very important aspect of this reception was that at one stage Ed Murrow pulled me over into a relatively quiet corner and said: “I am curious how RIAS treats all this. Have you heard from Washington for instance?” I said: “No, it didn't even occur to me.” “How do you handle a crisis like that without big reflection?” I said: “Well, at RIAS it is like the New York Times slogan, 'all the news that is fit to print', with us it is 'all the news that is fit to be broadcast.'” He looked out of the window for a moment and then said quietly: “I guess that is as good as any.” Now this I could get away with only with a director like Ed Murrow, a long time newspaper man, a man of such stature that he quickly sees the role of RIAS in Berlin. With later directors I would piously profess, of course, that we were getting guidance from Washington. In effect, they generally arrived a day or two late at best and we were amused to find out what we theoretically did wrong. But RIAS could never have operated effectively if we had been subject to the same restrictions as the language services. As so often happened during my three years at the Voice, if there was something really ticklish involving the White House then invariably we were told to wait until there was an official announcement by the White House. But RIAS was in a highly competitive position in Berlin and never could have been as effective as it was up until the day of German reunification if it hadn't had that virtually total independence.

If you wish you could also say it wouldn't have worked if there ever had been during all those years a real conflict in political terms between the US and Germany, because by that time RIAS was German financed and only formally under American control. Of all the seven and a half years I was at RIAS, I could not single out any particularly important development event up until the very end—of course, there was the Kennedy visit, but my role there as interpreter really had nothing to do with my USIA position.

Q: I want to ask a couple of questions. I used to hear Ed Murrow talk about the crew of RIAS being out covering the construction of the Wall as it was going up. If that were the case, what was being broadcast on RIAS? Did you actually have a crew out there when the Wall was going up recording the scene?

LOCHNER: On the West Berlin side, sure. But as I mentioned, I alone went to East Berlin three times during the night because none of my German staff could do so—it was years incidentally before things quieted down and really not until the Four-Power Agreement of 1971 when circulation became easier. Of course, we had reporters out observing the construction of the Wall on the Western side.

Q: Was this being broadcast in to East Germany?

LOCHNER: Very much so. All during the night; we were the only station on live all night long at that time. Most German radio stations carried canned news during the night and so many West German stations didn't carry the news of the Wall until their first live news in the morning, say at 6 am. Of course we carried live news every 15 minutes in the hope then that it might still help some people to escape. It turned out that the cutting of the city in half was so effective a measure that they started breaking up the streets simultaneously at all the points where later the Wall was constructed.

Q: When Ed said that it was probably the only thing you could do, had you already been broadcasting?

LOCHNER: Yes, but nobody had ever checked up, I had only been there three or four months....

Q: What I am talking about is a matter of hours. This happened at the reception which took place the night after they started building the wall.

LOCHNER: I should have said that on our drive through East Berlin he asked me to give him a briefing on RIAS. With the quick mind he had, I think he saw much more quickly than other people, the necessity, if you wish, of leaving the staff at RIAS alone—that they had more or less only to obey their professional consciences. It didn't seem to worry him when in effect I said: “We are on our own.” His remark: “I guess that is as good as any” was the end of that discussion. He never followed up asking why RIAS wasn't getting the guidances in time, etc.

Q: How widely was RIAS heard in West Germany?

LOCHNER: In West Germany, not at all, but in West Berlin. Its mission always was to address the East German population. That was its reason for existence. It was still true that without question more West Berliners listened to RIAS than their own station, SFB, which came into existence much later and was the outcome of the British having an outlet in West Berlin. They did not broadcast in 1946, as I earlier described as we answered a Russian challenge by creating RIAS, the British contented themselves with having an office, so to speak, in Berlin as part of their chain in West Germany called NWDR, North West German Radio. The Berlin radio station, SFB didn't come into existence until several years later.

Q: If I am not mistaken it was Al Hemsing who reported in his interview a stage of the construction of the Wall in the first day or two in which, I think, Russian tanks rolled up to the border. He and Lightner went over into East Berlin at that time. Do you remember anything like that?

LOCHNER: No I wasn't involved in that. Al and I only accompanied Ed on that trip I mentioned. Other than that I was too busy at the station, so I am not aware of that. It may well have been.

Lochner's Tour At RIAS Ends Unhappily Because Of Agency Decision To Cut RIAS Drastically

To get back to my years at RIAS. Very pleasant and productive as they were they were unfortunately destined to end in a very negative way. By early '68, Leonard Marks was the USIA Director and apparently, whether pressured by President Johnson or not, I don't know, was evidently determined to cut back on expenses. Among others, RIAS stood out as the most expensive operation. We on the US side were still paying 60 percent of the RIAS budget. The German government, Ministry of All German Affairs, was paying 40 percent of the budget. Leonard Marks sent me a so-called adviser named Alex Buchan, who was a friend of his and an owner of several small FM stations in the US. He didn't speak a word of German and had no background on European politics. He came for several months and pressured me and the rest of the American staff to find ways for drastically reducing the RIAS budget.

Among other arguments he would say to me: “What do you need 500 people for? In my stations the disk jockey plays the platters and on the full hour he tears off the AP ticker and reads off the news. So why do you need 500 people?” He never acquired any understanding for the totally different role of a European radio station, the need to have our own orchestra, choir, etc. I resisted these efforts among others by arguing with Buchan: “How can we sit here on the American side and contemplate these drastic reductions without so much as consulting our German partners who after all are paying 40 percent of the budget.” He absolutely prohibited that but given the close relationship of confidence I had with my top German members, it was inevitable that I informed them of what was going on. They were aware of it because this guy would go around in the building and look through the window of a studio and then ask one of the other American members accompanying him—I refused by that time to go around with him—”What are they doing? Is that really necessary?,” and then pull out a piece of paper and ask for the names stating that those jobs could be eliminated. A lot of our German staff understood

English so it naturally got through the house very quickly that here was some weird guy going around to determine which positions could be eliminated. My top German staff were aware of what was going on and I couldn't prevent them from reporting to the Ministry. But the Ministry never did anything about it.

American Contribution To RIAS Reduced From 60%-40% To 10%-90%—Structure Of RIAS Management Changed—Americans Reduced from 7 to 2—Germans Gained Principal Control

Apparently Marks got impatient because Buchan reported to him how obstreperous I was so he came to Bonn himself and wound up with Minister Herbert Wehner a very prominent SPD politician who at that particular point was Minister of All German Affairs. Apparently, I wasn't there, they had a rather bitter exchange and Wehner said to him, using the same simile that Brandt and others had used before, that the two pillars of the American presence in Berlin were the American troops and RIAS. Wehner said to Leonard Marks, “Over my dead body will we consent to the emasculation of RIAS. If it is money you need, no problem.” The upshot was that the 60-40 financing was changed to 10-90—10 percent on the American side which I think before the reunification had diminished down to something like 3 or 4 percent.

Hand in hand with the change in financing went a change in the structuring of RIAS. Until I left there were seven on the American side which was reduced to two. The title was changed from “RIAS director” to “chairman” reflecting about the equivalent of the position of the radio council at German radio stations where a manager is in charge of the day-to-day operations and there is a supervisory organ. From then on the top German was given the title “Intendant,” station manager, which he didn't have before. So in effect the US withdrew to a supervisory role, but that too worked without difficulties for literally decades more.

Lochner Transferred To Relatively Unimportant Post As PAO Switzerland (At Bern)

In my own case it resulted in my being banished to the clearly far less important position of press and cultural attach# in Bern, Switzerland. Mr. Marks never gave me an explanation, but I can only surmise that despite the success from the financial point of view in reducing the expense of RIAS, he was dissatisfied with what he must have considered my obstreperous tactics. I found out about the transfer through my predecessor in Bern calling me on the phone on Easter Sunday and saying he was glad to hear that I was coming down there. That was the first I learned about my being kicked out of RIAS. Mr. Marks, for whatever reasons, felt he had to announce this to the RIAS staff, so he came from Bonn to Berlin and called a RIAS staff meeting. He announced that he was so sorry that he had to pull me out to the far more important job as press and cultural attach# in Bern. I have never heard such derisive laughter from the German staff when he made that announcement.

Over all I would say that I was rather bitter that the reward from my own government for seven and a half years service at RIAS was exile in Bern. On the German side, perhaps to compensate, the same Minister of All German Affairs, Herbert Wehner, in a ceremony a few days later at RIAS with the whole staff present, awarded me one of the highest German decorations. Of course they had to get permission from the Agency to have it bestowed. While I appreciated that, it sharpened the contrast to how I was treated by the two sides.

As far as Bern is concerned, I asked my predecessor on the phone what they were doing down there—teaching democracy didn't seem to be among the priority tasks of USIS in Bern. He said that about once a year there is a press release. There was a pause. Then he said that they try to keep the Neue Zuercher Zeitung happy. I said, “Fine, but that probably doesn't consume much of your time.” (Actually in my three years I went down to Zurich about once a year and had an hour's talk on U.S. foreign policy with the famous chief editor of the best Swiss paper, Fred Luchsinger, whom I knew well from Germany where he had been a correspondent a number of years. Anything more, I would have

made a pest of myself.) I asked, “Anything else?” He finally remembered that that was the age of the moon landings and the Swiss were very interested in that. So during my three years about the only really useful thing I did was to provide film, tapes, etc. on our moon landings and to shepherd the Apollo 13 crew, the ones who didn't make it, but they came as official visitors to Switzerland and I was project officer for their visit. Other than that I simply sat out my three years in Bern and determined to retire at the end of it because I saw no future for myself in the Agency. All my predecessors as RIAS directors had gone on to higher positions in the Agency. After all RIAS was the biggest overseas operation; in my case it resulted in the demotion to this really quite superfluous job in Bern. Lochner Recommends Elimination Of Bern PAO Position And Retires From USIA

I thought I would, as a taxpayer, go out with a bang by saving the taxpayer an unnecessary position in my opinion, so I wrote a strong paper why it was not necessary to have a PAO in Bern. Since on the political side the Embassy people agreed there was no need for a full time political officer either, I suggested the two positions be merged. The Bern Embassy was really important only in three areas: the economic side, because of the weight of Switzerland in that sphere; the CIA man; and the consulate because there was a lot of Swiss travel to the US. The political section had essentially no more to do than I did. So whoever decides these things in Washington could not apparently simply overlook my paper suggesting the abolition of the slot. My career in USIA still ended in total frustration because of what happened. They transferred the slot to Geneva where there was already a full time USIS man who was not basically needed because whenever there was an important international conference in Geneva, all the big shots from Washington came there. So the permanent man dealt with the eternal sugar conference and things like that. Far from saving the taxpayers a slot, the slot was transferred to Geneva. But that is not the end of the story. They waited a few years and then they reinstated the slot in Bern. So the end result of my efforts was that instead of one slot less as I had hoped instead of the two, they wound up with three. So that was the end of my career in USIA.

Retrospective—Return To Discussion Of Kennedy Berlin Visit

Q: A word about the Kennedy visit to Germany?

LOCHNER: General Clay, whose interpreter I had been for the whole period he was Head of Military Government, recommended me to President Kennedy, so a few weeks before his visit I was called to Washington and McGeorge Bundy asked me to prepare a few simple phrases in German and to try to rehearse those with the President. So on a typewriter with large letters I prepared a few very simple sentences. McGeorge Bundy took me into the Oval Office, there was nobody else there, and presented me. I gave one copy to the President and slowly read out the first sentence in German and asked him to repeat it. When he did and looked up he must have seen my rather dismayed face because he said, “Not very good, was it?” So what do you say to a President under those circumstances? All I could think of was to blurt out, “Well, it certainly was better then your brother Bobby.” He had been to Berlin and tried some sentences in German and had butchered them in such a fashion that one couldn't possibly guess what he was trying to say. So fortunately the President took it lightly, he laughed and turned to McGeorge Bundy and said, “Let's leave the foreign languages to the distaff side.” Of course, everybody knows that Mrs. Kennedy spoke fluent French. So he had not intended to make a single statement in German and that is why it is relevant to what happened later to give this background.

I interpreted for him the whole three days that he was in Germany starting at the airport in Bonn. The receptions in Bonn/ Cologne, and Frankfurt were as enthusiastic as you could wish, but the one in Berlin overshadowed everything that we had experienced in Western Germany. We started out in a big open car. Kennedy and Adenauer sitting in the back, Willy Brandt and myself sitting on jump seats. There was a glass partition between us and the front. We had hardly driven 20-30 yards when President Kennedy, noticing there was a bar on our side of the glass where one could hold oneself, suggested that they stand up to be better seen. So Willy Brandt and I pushed back our jump seats and I crawled through

the legs of Adenauer and President Kennedy and sat in lonely splendor on the rear seat. Of course I wasn't needed at all and felt very unhappy. For all the years since then at the USIS office in Berlin there has been a picture showing the three gentlemen standing and me with a very unhappy face in the rear because I felt totally useless—as we were driving I couldn't get out.

When we stopped for his major speech and walked up the stairs to the City Hall, he called me over and said I want you to write out for me on a slip of paper “I am a Berliner” in German. We first went to Willy Brandt's office while hundreds of thousands cheered outside. I quickly, by pencil, wrote it out in capital letters and he rehearsed it a few times. And that is really the whole story. I am assuming it was in English in the original text. There have been all sorts of stories about the manuscript, etc. I can only tell my part.

After the speech we came back for a little while to Willy Brandt's office where there was a short reception with some of the top politicians and, of course, I had instructions to stay close to the President in case he talked to some Germans. So I couldn't help overhearing McGeorge Bundy saying to him, “Mr. President, I think that went a little too far.” So, McGeorge Bundy, like myself and many others, instantly realized that his making this statement in German gave it that much more weight then if he had said it in English. I find this theory confirmed by the fact that the President seemed to agree and thereupon and then and there made a few changes in his second major speech later on at the university, changes that amounted to making a few more conciliatory statements, if you wish, towards the East. I only describe my own personal experience. I conclude from that that he agreed. It didn't have any affect on the famous statement, of course, but it is interesting to me that McGeorge Bundy like myself had this instant reaction that the statement was that much stronger for having been made in German and millions of German since then have repeated his “Ich bin ein Berliner” while they probably would not have quoted “I am a Berliner.”

Q: President Kennedy may have anticipated that and did it purposely.

LOCHNER: Yes, and that is probably why he did it. My own personal conclusion is that this overwhelming reception by the Berliners, which was so incredible, even after the enthusiastic receptions in Bonn and Frankfurt, made him feel he wanted to do something even stronger. That is my assumption. Why else would he have done it?

All my experiences with President Kennedy were very pleasant and, of course, as an interpreter when you are close to somebody like that for three days you see a lot of things. In the Cologne Cathedral when he attended mass together with Adenauer I was sitting in the row behind. In the mass you have to kneel repeatedly and I could see how his back was obviously causing him great trouble—all the more remarkably I never once saw him lose his temper or say one angry word to anyone. This only re-enforced my hero-worship.

The Jarring Contrast Between The Grace Of The Kennedy Visit And The Performance OfVice President Johnson Who Visited Berlin In Company With General Clay

The very opposite is true in my experiences with then Vice President Johnson. When he came to Berlin six days after the Wall with General Clay, he was picked up at the airport by Mayor Brandt in an open German convertible. That was just the way Johnson loved it. It was a beautiful day, he got out of the car baby kissing, etc. Our first stop was at McNair Barracks where he had lunch with the American soldiers. Of course, Willy Brandt left. When Johnson came out after the lunch there was the closed Cadillac of the US Mission. He was furious. He asked who was the transportation officer and some poor snook captain or major stepped forward and he bawled him out in front of everybody. He said he was outraged and demanded an open car. The military does not go in for convertibles as official cars so they couldn't provide any better transportation. So by the next day when the major trip through the city was scheduled, there was still the closed Cadillac. In the front were the driver, myself and a secret service man, in the rear at the left was Willy Brandt, in the middle Ambassador Dowling, a career diplomat, and Johnson on the right. We had hardly driven a hundred yards when Johnson suddenly ordered Dowling to kneel on the floor of the car. Johnson opened the door and asked Dowling to put his arms around

Johnson's left leg. He stood up half leaning out of the car with his right leg dangling outside of the car while waving with his right hand and holding onto a bar in the car with his left hand. Dowling for the rest of our trip through Berlin was squatting in the back of the car with his arms around Johnson's left leg. I did not dare turn around because I could imagine how mortified Willy Brandt must have been seeing the American Ambassador representing the President squatting on the floor. During one brief moment when we went on the autobahn where no crowds were allowed, poor Dowling was allowed to sit down again. But Johnson was still in an aggressive mood. Suddenly he turned to Brandt—of course I didn't have to do any interpreting because of Brandt's fluent English—and said, “Mr. Mayor, I understand you have some very beautiful porcelain here.” “Yes,” said Willy Brandt, “the Imperial Porcelain Manufacture.” Johnson said, “Let's go there.” Willy Brandt said, “Sorry it is Sunday and the store is closed.” Johnson flared up and said, “What good are you as the mayor of this city if you can't get a store opened for the Vice President of the United States.” Well, what happened was that over the car phone there was some furious phoning by the secret service man and they dug up somebody and we went there and Johnson selected a set of dishes for his ladies. I must say the contrast in my observations—it was also about three days with Vice President Johnson—couldn't have been more extreme.

The worst moment for me came during his major speech to the City Parliament, which, of course, was being broadcast live on television and radio. I did it more or less sentence by sentence and at one point he said something that I literally didn't understand. There was a key word which he half swallowed. It was embarrassing enough that I had to ask him to repeat the sentence, but in one of the worst moments in my career as an interpreter, I didn't understand it the second time either. By that time I had observed him enough to be sure that if I asked a second time for him to repeat it he probably would have screamed for a competent interpreter. Later on I checked the tape. What he had said was in terms of defiant statements toward the communists—”We will not be bullied,” but with his Texas accent he kind of swallowed the word making it sound like “We won't be brrred.” Given the context I translated it something like “we won't be provoked” which was near enough. But

I mention it because of this horrible feeling that split second, “My God, this is going to be a major public scandal.” It was difficult to be interpreter for Johnson because you never knew whether he would explode over something that wasn't even your fault.

Q: It was difficult to be near the man in any circumstance because no matter what you did something was bound to go wrong and he would explode into these usually profane expletives.

LOCHNER: That I must say I did not hear him do. But I think those two examples I gave were sufficient.

Q: Do you think you have pretty much covered what you have to say now?

LOCHNER: Yes, I really think so. I am a person who believes in essentials, not in elaborate minor details and really that is just about all that is of relevance.

Q: Thank you very much.

LOCHNER: We are all happy to cooperate in this project and if some of the experiences I have had are of interest to future generations so much the better.

Q: Thank you very much, Bob.

End of interview